



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
HUMANITIES



Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities:

Summary Report 1998

Survey of Earned Doctorates

SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HIGHLIGHTS

This report presents data about recipients of research doctorates awarded by U.S. universities from July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998. The information is taken from the 1998 Survey of Earned Doctorates, an annual census of new research doctorate recipients.

- During 1998, 387 universities in the United States conferred a total of 42,683 doctorates, slightly more (0.3 percent) than in 1997. The number of doctorates earned has increased for 13 consecutive years. U.S. citizens earned 27,352 of the 1998 research doctorates.
- The largest number of doctorates awarded was in the broad field of life sciences, in which 8,540 Ph.D.s were earned. The number of degrees conferred in the other broad areas were 7,075 in social sciences; 6,739 in the physical sciences; 6,559 in education; 5,919 in engineering; 5,499 in humanities; and 2,352 in business and other professional areas. The number of doctorates granted in the fields of humanities and engineering has increased the most over the past decade (55 percent and 41 percent).
- Women received 17,856 doctorates, or 41.8 percent of all doctorates granted in 1998, the highest percentage ever for women. Over the past 40 years, the rate of growth for female doctorates has averaged 7.5 percent per year, compared with just under 3 percent annually for male doctorates. The number of men earning doctorates in 1998 declined for the second straight year. Among U.S. citizens, 47.7 percent of doctorates were earned by women. By broad field the percentages of research doctorates earned by women in 1998 were 62.8 percent in education, 54.2 in the social sciences, 48.6 in the humanities, 45.4 percent in the life sciences, 41.6 percent in business/professional, 23.7 percent in the physical sciences, and 13.0 in engineering.
- U.S.-citizen racial/ethnic minority groups earned 14.7 percent of the doctorates earned by U.S. citizens in 1998—the largest percentage ever. Among the U.S. citizens who identified their race/ethnicity (96.9 percent), blacks earned 1,467 doctorates; Hispanics, 1,190; Asians (including Pacific Islanders), 1,168; and American Indians (including Alaskan Natives), 189. Blacks were the predominant minority group receiving doctorates in education, and Asian Americans predominated in engineering.
- U.S. citizens received 71.3 percent of all doctorates earned in 1998 by individuals with known citizenship status (92.7 percent of all recipients). China was the country of origin for the largest number of non-U.S. doctorate recipients with 2,571, followed by India with 1,259, Taiwan with 1,110, Korea with 710, and Canada with 448. By broad field, the percentage of doctorates earned by U.S. citizens ranged from 47.0 percent in engineering and 58.5 percent in physical sciences, to 82.9 percent in humanities and 90.3 percent in education.
- Median time to receiving the doctorate since earning the baccalaureate was 10.4 years in 1998. Median time to degree since first enrollment in any graduate program was 7.3 years. The typical Ph.D. recipient was just under 34 years of age at the time the degree was conferred.
- Three in five (60.6 percent) of all doctorate recipients in 1998 reported fellowships or teaching/research assistantships from programs or institutions as their primary source of financial support for graduate education. Only half (49.1 percent) of all doctorate recipients reported educational indebtedness (loans) at the time of graduation.
- The percentage of Ph.D.s reporting definite postgraduation commitments for employment or study was 69.6 percent in 1998—about 70 percent of them will work and 30 percent will continue as postdoctorates. Among U.S. citizens and those holding permanent visas with firm employment plans, 50 percent were entering academe as their planned work sector. About one-fourth indicated industry or self-employment; 8.2 percent said some level of government; while the remaining 17.4 percent indicated “other.”

Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report 1998

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NOTICE

This report is based on data collected in the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) conducted for the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the U.S. Department of Education (USED), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) under NSF Contract No. SRS-9712655. Findings in this publication represent analyses developed by NORC, which have been reviewed, but not necessarily verified, by the participating Federal agencies and do not necessarily reflect the views of the sponsoring agencies.

NSF publications from the Survey of Earned Doctorates and the Doctorate Records File are available free on request. (See inside back cover.) Standardized tables on baccalaureate origins of Ph.D.s by major field of doctorate and trend tables on citizenship, race/ethnicity, and sex of Ph.D.s by fine field of doctorate are available for a fee. Customized tables can also be prepared at cost. For more information, please contact:

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